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AUTHOR Gehrke, Nathalie
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ABSTRACT

Teacher leaders often teach full- or part-time while assuming leadership responsibilities. Also, they have often learned new roles just by doing the tasks demanded by those roles. A more systematic approach to helping teachers develop the requisite skills for assuming leadership roles (e.g. department chairs, team and grade leaders, and curriculum committee chairs) is discussed. Emerging opportunities for leadership include three programs: beginning teacher assistance programs, school-centered decision making (site-based management), and professional development schools. Six leadership roles have been identified, which might serve as organizers for the descriptive reports on the formal programs to develop leadership skills: (1) continuing to teach and improve one's own teaching; (2) organizing and leading peer reviews of school practice; (3) providing curriculum development knowledge; (4) participating in school-level decision making; (5) leading in-service education and assisting other teachers; and (6) participating in the performance evaluation of teachers. The digest recommends a more concerted effort to develop programs to replace learning on the job as well as to evaluate teacher leader programs. (SM)

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Developing Teachers' Leadership Skills

Nathalie Gehrke

There have long been teacher leaders in schools. They have traditionally accepted positions as department chairs, team and grade leaders, curriculum committee chairs, and more. With the advent of school and teacher education restructuring efforts, new leadership roles are emerging (Lieberman & Miller, 1990). Whether taking on traditional or emerging roles, a major characteristic of teacher leaders is that they often teach full- or part-time and then assume other responsibilities (Howey, 1988). An additional characteristic is that they have generally learned the new role just by doing it.

A more systematic approach to developing the requisite skills for assuming leadership roles may be helpful. Whether or not a teacher takes on a formal leadership position, the acquisition of these skills may serve to enhance performance in the classroom.

Emerging Opportunities for Leadership

Beginning Teacher Assistance Programs

Programs such as those developed in Ohio (Zimpher, 1988) and in California require the identification of experienced master teachers to work with beginners. These "mentors" must be able to provide not only good role modeling, but also offer the kinds of help necessary to establish the beginners as competent professionals. They must know about teaching children *and* about teaching adults; they must have a level of expertise that goes beyond being a comforter and a source of practical information.

School-Centered Decision Making

School-centered decision making, also known as site-based management, has been variously interpreted (Sirotnik & Clark, 1988), but in its most authentic form it requires strong teacher involvement in decisions about structures and programs in their schools. School districts that have moved to decentralize decision making have discovered that teachers with conflict resolution and communications skills are more effective. Also helpful is an understanding of the school district's organization and knowledge of the state and federal education scene.

Professional Development Schools (PDS)

Professional development schools call for an array of new teacher leader roles. These PDS, jointly created by schools and universities (Holmes, 1990), propose to serve as the locus for teacher preparation, career-long professional development, and school innovation and inquiry. Teacher leaders will be called on to demonstrate skills required in mentoring programs and school-based management, as well as skills related to a wide array of peer helping approaches, inquiry methods, innovation leadership, and school-university collaboration.

Learning Leadership Skills

In the past, teacher leaders' successes or failures were due more to context, previous experience, and personal characteristics than to any formal effort to provide them with appropriate leadership skills. Teachers have been expected to have the necessary skills on entry into leadership positions, or to develop them on the job.

Lieberman, Saxl, and Miles (1988), in hopes of offering guidance for formal program development for teacher leaders, described in detail the kinds of on-the-job learning of teacher leaders they studied. The teacher leaders reported that they had had to develop competence in several areas including: rapport building, organizational diagnosis, dealing with the change process, finding and using resources, managing the leadership work, and building skills and confidence in others.

Devaney (1987) offered an inclusive list of leadership areas that teachers might be called on to exercise in emerging school organizations. The six roles she identified can provide an organizer for the descriptive reports on the formal programs to develop leadership skills:

Continuing to Teach and Improve One's Own Teaching

This is the largest category of staff development programs for teacher leadership. Teaching expertise, including subject matter knowledge, seems critical because it is basic to other leadership roles, including in-service education, advising and assisting individual teachers, and peer support. Maeroff (1988) described several programs for enhancing teachers' power by increasing their knowledge of their subject matter. He claimed that the sessions were designed to get teachers accustomed to acting and being perceived as professionals and required them to set the agenda for their own learning.

Organizing and Leading Peer Reviews of School Practice

Programs for the development of teachers' ability to examine school practices must include preparation in doing a form of practical research. Pine (1986) suggested that action research be seen as an ongoing aspect of staff development and that teachers be prepared accordingly. Action research methods have proven useful to teachers in the Puget Sound Educational Consortium who are seeking to enhance their leadership

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capacities within their individual schools, their districts, and the consortium.

Providing Curriculum Development Knowledge

Curriculum development knowledge may also be seen as requisite to leading peer review of school practice. Klein (1985), for example, discussed the master teacher as a curriculum leader. Perhaps because curriculum development knowledge is seen as a prerequisite to teacher leadership, there are no readily apparent descriptions of programs to develop this knowledge among teacher leaders. Perhaps, too, this is an area where undergraduate and graduate courses are assumed to provide sufficient preparation; such an assumption may be unwarranted.

Participating in School-Level Decision Making

Many articles may be found espousing the importance of teachers' involvement in decision making in their school, but the impression is given that one learns decision making primarily by doing it. The Pittsburgh Public School District is one exception (Johnston, Bickel, & Wallace, 1990). In-house facilitators of organization development are trained to lead problem solving and to conduct process observations in each participating school.

Leading In-Service Education and Assisting Other Teachers

As early as 1982, Joyce and Showers offered guidance to program creation for teachers in peer coaching. Little, Galagaran, and O'Neal (1984) later offered directions for training of teachers for teacher assistance responsibilities, based on the California experiences in mentor teacher programs and teacher advisor projects. Raney and Robbins (1989) have given a good overview of the cognitive coaching program offered in Sonoma County, California. Hilton, Kuehnle, School, and Zimpher (1988) described an induction program for "invigorating the new and experienced" teachers in Ohio, while Anderson, Asbury, Grossman, Howey, Rentel, and Zimpher (1988) described a peer assistance program, also in Ohio. These latter two efforts have led to the creation of a graduate program in professional development through the Ohio State University.

Participating in the Performance Evaluation of Teachers

The Ohio teacher leader program described by Anderson et al. (1988) prepared teachers not only for assistance roles, but also for performance review of peers. Descriptions have also been given of the Schenley High School Teacher Center and the preparation for teacher assistance and performance review of the Pittsburgh teachers who participate in it (Johnston et al., 1990).

Conclusion

As in the larger field of teacher education, there is little evidence of research on the actual effectiveness of the programs offered to develop leadership skills. There are, at best, developers' comments on perceived effectiveness. Perhaps the next five years will see a more concerted effort, not just to develop programs to replace learning on the job, but also to evaluate teacher leader programs and thus enhance not only the programs offered, but the leaders who emerge.

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Mary E. Dilworth, Director
Judy A. Beck, Associate Director

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